



Marcia Mayeda
Director

County of Los Angeles
Department of Animal Care and Control
Administrative Office
5898 Cherry Avenue
Long Beach, California 90805
(562) 728-4610 • Fax (562) 422-3478
<http://animalcare.lacounty.gov>



July 28, 2009

Shelter Locations

Downey Shelter
11258 S. Garfield Ave.
Downey, CA 90242
(562) 940-6898

Carson Shelter
216 W. Victoria St.
Gardena, CA 90248
(310) 523-9566

Baldwin Park Shelter
4275 N. Elton St.
Baldwin Park, CA 91706
(626) 962-3577

Lancaster Shelter
5210 W. Avenue I
Lancaster, CA 93536
(661) 940-4191

Castaic Shelter
31044 N. Charlie Cyma.
Road
Castaic, CA 91384
(661) 257-3191

Agoura Shelter
29525 Agoura Rd.
Agoura, CA 91301
(818) 991-0071

Major Case Unit
11258 S. Garfield Ave.
Downey, CA 90242
(562) 658-2000

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL -
REVISED FEE SCHEDULE
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

Approval of the recommended action will establish the Department of Animal Care and Control Fee Schedule for services provided to the public.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD AFTER THE PUBLIC
HEARING:**

Adopt the attached Department of Animal Care and Control Fee Schedule (Attachment I), to be effective August 1, 2009, reflecting revised fees for services provided to the public. The revised Fee Schedule provides for the appropriate recovery of costs for a variety of services provided to the public including: adoptions, owner redemption, vaccinations, spay and neuter surgery, owner relinquishments, and disposal of dead animals.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION

On May 26, 2009, your Board approved the removal of certain fees from Title 10 of the Los Angeles County Code. Ordinance No. 2009-0017 was subsequently adopted on June 2, 2009 to enact these changes with an effective date of July 2, 2009. The original action included an implementation plan that required the Department of Animal Care and Control (Department), in collaboration with the Auditor-Controller, to submit a revised fee schedule to your Board for subsequent consideration. The proposed Fee Schedule adjusts Department fees to more appropriately reflect the cost of services provided to the public.

The fees charged by the Department have not been updated in several years. The costs to provide these services fluctuate annually due to variations in costs related to: labor, medications and food, facility maintenance and improvements, utilities, equipment repair and replacement, and other related supplies and factors that impact the cost to provide the service. Fees for adoptions and pet sterilizations have been standardized to better align with industry standards and improve customer service by providing a more user-friendly structure. Attachment II provides a brief background of the rationale utilized for each group of proposed fees.

In addition to increased Departmental revenue resulting from increases in fees obtained from residents of the County's unincorporated communities, any proposed adjustment to fees will also benefit the Department's contract cities by providing revenue offsets to charges for services.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended action supports the County's Strategic Plan Goal of Community and Municipal Services (Goal #3) through ensuring resources are available to deliver customer oriented municipal services to the County's diverse unincorporated communities and Strategic Plan Goal of Public Safety (Goal #5) through ensuring resources are available to provide for the safety and security of the people of Los Angeles County.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Adoption of this recommended fee schedule will result in approximately \$500,000 of additional revenue annually for the Department. Redemption fees paid by residents of client contract cities will be credited to that client contract city as a means of offsetting costs of services provided. The estimated impact assumes a similar amount of transactions among the various categories currently being projected for Fiscal Year 2008-09.

Rate Fee Calculation and Methodology

Each year, the Department works collaboratively with the Auditor-Controller for technical advice and a review of costs in the establishment of billing rates for contract cities. The Department proposes that in addition to the contract city billing rate review process, an annual review of all fees charged to residents for services rendered be undertaken. Subsequent to this initial transition, the recommendations for these fees would be presented to your Board for consideration prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.

This revised process will enable the Department to maintain a current fee schedule and recover appropriate costs on a timelier basis.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Government Code Section 54985 permits the County to establish fees to recover the costs of providing services.

Prior to the enactment of adopting a new fee or approving an increase in an existing fee, Government Code Section 66018 requires a local agency to hold a public hearing, at which oral or written presentations can be made. The Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors, in accordance with Section 6062(a) of the Government Code, published an official notice of the time and place of said public hearing, including a general explanation of the fees to be established or revised. All fees have been reviewed by the Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The process to align fees more appropriately with the costs to provide the service will generate additional revenue for the Department. The additional revenue will provide opportunities for the Department to better provide services to the residents of the unincorporated communities of the County. The proposed adjustments to fees will also aid contract cities in offsetting their animal control costs.

Adjusting the redemption fees to more appropriately cover actual costs may deter some pet owners from reclaiming their pets. However, the increased fees will also serve to deter pet owners from allowing their pets to roam at large, thereby reducing public health and safety concerns for local residents.

The proposed increase in adoption fees is not anticipated to have a significant impact on adoption rates. The recommended rate of \$50 for the first 10 days that a dog or cat is in the care of the Department is very reasonable based on a survey of other animal control jurisdictions in the region. The adoption fee will be reduced to \$30 for each dog or cat after 10 days in the care of the Department. The adoption fee includes the cost of vaccinations, microchip implantations, any necessary de-worming and the daily care of the animal.

The Department will closely monitor its redemption and adoption rates, and recommend changes in fees if necessary.

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
July 28, 2009
Page 4

CONCLUSION

Please return one adopted copy of this letter to the Department of Animal Care and Control.

Respectfully submitted,


MARCIA MAYEDA
Director

MM:DD:mtm

Attachments (2)

c: Chief Executive Officer
Acting County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Department of Animal Care and Control – Revised Fee Schedule

Medical		
Spay and Neuter - Dogs	Current	Proposed
All Dogs	---	\$50
Female Dog Spay <25 lbs	\$35	---
26 – 50 lbs	45	---
51 - 70 lbs	55	---
>70 lbs	100	---
Additional (in heat or pregnant)	10-20	Vet ⁽¹⁾
Male Dog Neuter <25 lbs	30	---
26 - 50 lbs	40	---
51 - 70 lbs	50	---
>70	70-90	---
Spay and Neuter – Cats	Current	Proposed
All Cats	---	\$40
Female Cat Spay	\$25	---
Additional (in heat or pregnant)	10	Vet ⁽¹⁾
Male Cat Neuter	20	---
Spay and Neuter – Other	Current	Proposed
Other (rabbits, etc.)	---	\$40
Veterinary Services	Current	Proposed
Rabies	\$5	\$10
DHLPP (6 in 1)	---	14
DHLPP+C (7 in 1) (w/Corona)	---	16
DHLPP +CB (w/Corona + Bordatella)	---	21
Bordetella (intra nasal)	---	15
Bordetella (injection)	---	15
FVRCP+C (w/Chlamydia)	---	15
Leukemia	---	16
FVRCP+CL (w/ Chlamydia + Leukemia)	10	20
Veterinarian Services per hour	55	Vet ⁽¹⁾
RVT Services per hour	35	RVT ⁽²⁾
Vaccinations	10-20	See Above
Elective surgeries	10-30	Vet ⁽¹⁾
Prescriptions	5-10	Cost

Shelter		
Impound and Boarding	Current	Proposed
Small animals other than dogs/cats	\$2	\$10
Dogs and cats - 1st impound	10	20
Dogs and cats - 2nd impound	20	40
Dogs - 2nd impound altered	N/A	N/A
Dogs - 2nd impound unaltered	N/A	N/A
Dogs and cats - 3rd impound	30	60
Dogs - 3rd impound altered	N/A	N/A
Dogs - 3rd impound unaltered	N/A	N/A
Special handling fee (per hour)	40	ACO ⁽³⁾
Care and Feeding (Boarding)		
Dogs and cats (per day)	8	18
Small animals other than dogs/cats (per day)	2	12
Large animals (per day)	10	12
Dead Animal Disposal	Current	Proposed
Picked up by shelter – small	\$10	\$60
Picked up by shelter – large	250	250
Special handling fee/hour	40	ACO ⁽³⁾
Delivered to shelter – small	0	10
Delivered to shelter – large	200	250
Delivered to shelter by business	5	10
Animal Relinquishment	Current	Proposed
Picked up by shelter – Small	\$10	\$50
Picked up by shelter – Litter	10	50
Picked up by shelter - Small livestock	25	50
Picked up by shelter - Single large animal	100	250
Special handling fee (per hour)	40	ACO ⁽³⁾
Delivered to shelter - Small animal	0	10
Delivered to shelter – Litter	0	25
Delivered to shelter - Small livestock	25	25
Delivered to shelter - Large animal	50	60
Animal Adoptions	Current	Proposed
All Dogs (first 10 days in care/after 10 days in care)	\$10/\$10	\$50/\$30
All Cats (first 10 days in care/after 10 days in care)	\$10/\$10	50/30
Small animals	5	10
Senior animal	7.50	10
Large animals	50	Market ⁽⁴⁾
Reptiles/Exotic Birds/Other		Market ⁽⁵⁾
Rescue groups – Dogs	35	35
Rescue groups – Cats	25	25

Footnotes:

- (1) The approved hourly rate, or fraction thereof, for services provided by a Department Veterinarian.
- (2) The approved hourly rate, or fraction thereof, for services provided by a Department Registered Veterinary Technician.
- (3) The approved hourly rate, or fraction thereof, for field services.
- (4) "The adoption price of "large other" animals shall be 50 percent of the purchase price for such animals in the retail market. The retail purchase price shall be established by obtaining the average purchase price from three independent retail sources and calculating the average price. At no time will a "large other" animal be adopted for less than the market price for slaughter unless authorized by the Director."
- (5) "The adoption price of "small other" animals shall be 50 percent of the purchase price for such animals in the retail pet market. The retail purchase price shall be established by obtaining the average purchase price from three independent retail sources and calculating the average price. At no time will a "small other" animal be adopted for less than \$10 unless authorized by the Director."

**DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL
REVISED FEE SCHEDULE**

Background

Spaying and Neutering Fees: The recommended fees of \$50 for a dog spay/neuter and \$40 for a cat spay/neuter are recommended based on the following factors:

1. Providing a set fee for all dogs and all cats instead of the current practice of utilizing a price range based on the size/gender of the animal prevents confusion over what fees to charge or the estimate provided to a potential adopter. The proposed structure eliminates adoption decisions made by cost factor instead of the suitability for the home and should assist in the adoption of larger dogs which are typically the most difficult dogs to place.
2. Recovering full cost for spay/neuter surgeries (up to \$98 for a female dog) is cost prohibitive and will result in fewer adoptions and increased euthanasia. The proposed price structure balances the benefits and legal requirements of spay and neuter with the mission critical function of adoption.
3. Low cost spay/neuter services are a critical public service to reduce the number of unwanted and abandoned companion animals. Through a reduction in the number of unwanted animals, the Department will reduce its operating costs over time because fewer animals require shelter and adoption.
4. A survey of southern California animal care and control agencies⁽¹⁾ suggests a similar methodology and price structure.

The "In Heat or Pregnant" category is a charge that is generally be attributed to personal pets that are brought to one of the County's shelters for low-cost spay/neuter services. Spaying dogs and cats that are in heat or pregnant takes more veterinary staff time due to increased surgical time. The Department will add the hourly cost (or fraction thereof) of a Veterinarian to the total charge. The pet owner is advised of this additional charge prior to leaving their pet for surgery.

Vaccinations: Vaccinations are priced to realize a modest amount of revenue for the Department, with the exception of the anti-rabies vaccine. Vaccine sales are an important source of revenue for the Department. Pursuant to Health and

Safety Code 121690, local governments may not charge in excess of the actual cost for the anti-rabies vaccine. The proposed fee of \$10 is consistent with the recent acquisition cost of \$10.15.

Adoptions: The cost of preparing a dog or cat for adoption is approximately \$60. The proposed Adoption fees of \$50 for the first 10 days in the care of the Department and \$30 thereafter is based on the following assumptions:

1. The recommended price includes the cost of vaccinations, microchip implantation and de-worming. The former price of \$10 did not include these costs, which were added at the time of adoption for a final charge of \$35.
2. A survey of southern California animal care agencies indicated a range of \$47 - \$110 for dog adoptions and \$20 - \$70 for cat adoptions.
3. The Department does not recommend raising the fees for dog or cat adoptions for animal rescue groups. These groups provide a valuable service by adopting animals that would otherwise be euthanized. These organizations are non-profit charities and often spend considerable amounts of their donations to rehabilitate shelter animals they have adopted. The Department does recommend a modest increase for "other" animals to help defray increases in animal tracking and processing costs.

The "small other" animals can be rabbits, guinea pigs, small rodents such as hamsters or domesticated mice and rats, snakes, lizards, turtles, poultry, sheep, goats, pot-bellied pigs, fish, exotic birds such as parrots, and so forth. This is a challenging category because animals in this category can be valued anywhere from \$5 for a mouse to \$20,000 for a rare parrot. The Department recommends adopting the following language for determining the costs of these animals:

"The adoption price of "small other" animals shall be 50% of the purchase price for such animals in the retail pet market. The retail purchase price shall be established by obtaining the purchase price from three independent retail sources and calculating the average price. At no time will a "small other" animal be adopted for less than \$10 unless authorized by the Director."

The minimum price of \$10 is to prevent owners of snakes from adopting small rodents as food sources. However, since some animals (such as mice) may not be adopted at such price, the Department would utilize discretion to reduce the cost or waive payment to avoid euthanasia if a suitable home were found.

The "large other" animals include horses, cattle, hogs, emus, ostriches, llamas, burros, mules and similar animals. Similar to small animals, there can be a wide variety of values in this category. For example, a 30 year old horse that cannot be ridden has little value, compared to a five year old healthy and sound horse

that could fetch thousands of dollars. Consequently, the Department recommends adopting the following language for determining the costs of these animals:

"The adoption price of "large other" animals shall be 50% of the purchase price for such animals in the retail market. The retail purchase price shall be established by obtaining the purchase price from three independent retail sources and calculating the average price. At no time will a "large other" animal be adopted for less than the market price for slaughter unless authorized by the Director."

The requirement that the adoption fee be higher than the slaughter price is to prevent people from adopting these animals, only to sell them for slaughter. However, since some animals have little or no value, the Department would again use discretion to lower the cost or waive payment if a suitable home is found. At no time is an animal permitted to be sold for slaughter under any circumstances.

Dead Animal Fees: Dead animal fees are classified in two categories: (1) the Department picks up the body in the field or (2) the owner delivers the body to the animal shelter for disposal. The Department would recover the costs of field pick up and encourage owners to deliver the animal directly to the shelter. For the large animal pickup, the \$250 covers the Department's special handling expense for disposing of the carcass through its existing contract for dead animal removal.

Live Animal Fees: Persons who wish to surrender their pets have two options: (1) they may contact the Department to have the animal picked up at their home, or (2) they may bring the animal to their local shelter. Similar to dead animal fees, the cost of picking up the animal in the field requires an officer's time to drive to the location, meet with the owner to obtain information and secure the animal, drive back to the shelter, and impound the animal. As such, the Department will strongly encourage pet owners to deliver their animals directly to the shelter. Full cost recovery is not recommended as it may result in animal abandonment and more stray animals on the streets.

Alternatively, the owner may bring their unwanted animal to their local shelter for a much lower fee. While these fees are still less than the actual costs to the Department, again the Department believes it is important to keep these fees at a minimum to discourage animal abandonment.

Redemption Penalties: The purpose of redemption penalties is to dissuade pet owners from allowing their pets to run at large. The costs for housing pets are recovered in the daily board rate. Redemption penalties are a mechanism to encourage socially responsible behavior by creating penalties for pet owners who violate leash laws.

The Department recommends raising the redemption penalty to a level more commensurate with creating a meaningful disincentive for leash law violators. A review of other southern California animal care and control agencies indicates redemption penalties from \$15 - \$90 for the first offense; \$45 - \$120 for the second offense; and \$46 - \$120 for the third offense. The Department currently charges \$10, \$20, and \$30 for first, second and third offenses. Thus, the proposed structure of \$20, \$40, and \$60 will better align with the lower end of penalties charged by other agencies.

Daily Care and Feeding: These fees recover the Department's actual costs for daily care and feeding.

⁽¹⁾ Other agencies surveyed include San Diego County Animal Control, City of Los Angeles Animal Services, Southeast Area Animal Control Authority (SEAACA), Pasadena Humane Society and SPCA, and Orange County Animal Care.

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The Department will closely monitor its redemption and adoption rates, and recommend changes in fees if necessary.

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Respectfully submitted,


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Shelter		
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Small animals	5	10
Senior animal	7.50	10
Large animals	50	Market ⁽⁴⁾
Reptiles/Exotic Birds/Other		Market ⁽⁵⁾
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Rescue groups – Cats	25	25

Footnotes:

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**DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL
REVISED FEE SCHEDULE**

Background

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1. Providing a set fee for all dogs and all cats instead of the current practice of utilizing a price range based on the size/gender of the animal prevents confusion over what fees to charge or the estimate provided to a potential adopter. The proposed structure eliminates adoption decisions made by cost factor instead of the suitability for the home and should assist in the adoption of larger dogs which are typically the most difficult dogs to place.
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3. Low cost spay/neuter services are a critical public service to reduce the number of unwanted and abandoned companion animals. Through a reduction in the number of unwanted animals, the Department will reduce its operating costs over time because fewer animals require shelter and adoption.
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1. The recommended price includes the cost of vaccinations, microchip implantation and de-worming. The former price of \$10 did not include these costs, which were added at the time of adoption for a final charge of \$35.
2. A survey of southern California animal care agencies indicated a range of \$47 - \$110 for dog adoptions and \$20 - \$70 for cat adoptions.
3. The Department does not recommend raising the fees for dog or cat adoptions for animal rescue groups. These groups provide a valuable service by adopting animals that would otherwise be euthanized. These organizations are non-profit charities and often spend considerable amounts of their donations to rehabilitate shelter animals they have adopted. The Department does recommend a modest increase for "other" animals to help defray increases in animal tracking and processing costs.

The "small other" animals can be rabbits, guinea pigs, small rodents such as hamsters or domesticated mice and rats, snakes, lizards, turtles, poultry, sheep, goats, pot-bellied pigs, fish, exotic birds such as parrots, and so forth. This is a challenging category because animals in this category can be valued anywhere from \$5 for a mouse to \$20,000 for a rare parrot. The Department recommends adopting the following language for determining the costs of these animals:

"The adoption price of "small other" animals shall be 50% of the purchase price for such animals in the retail pet market. The retail purchase price shall be established by obtaining the purchase price from three independent retail sources and calculating the average price. At no time will a "small other" animal be adopted for less than \$10 unless authorized by the Director."

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The "large other" animals include horses, cattle, hogs, emus, ostriches, llamas, burros, mules and similar animals. Similar to small animals, there can be a wide variety of values in this category. For example, a 30 year old horse that cannot be ridden has little value, compared to a five year old healthy and sound horse

that could fetch thousands of dollars. Consequently, the Department recommends adopting the following language for determining the costs of these animals:

"The adoption price of "large other" animals shall be 50% of the purchase price for such animals in the retail market. The retail purchase price shall be established by obtaining the purchase price from three independent retail sources and calculating the average price. At no time will a "large other" animal be adopted for less than the market price for slaughter unless authorized by the Director."

The requirement that the adoption fee be higher than the slaughter price is to prevent people from adopting these animals, only to sell them for slaughter. However, since some animals have little or no value, the Department would again use discretion to lower the cost or waive payment if a suitable home is found. At no time is an animal permitted to be sold for slaughter under any circumstances.

Dead Animal Fees: Dead animal fees are classified in two categories: (1) the Department picks up the body in the field or (2) the owner delivers the body to the animal shelter for disposal. The Department would recover the costs of field pick up and encourage owners to deliver the animal directly to the shelter. For the large animal pickup, the \$250 covers the Department's special handling expense for disposing of the carcass through its existing contract for dead animal removal.

Live Animal Fees: Persons who wish to surrender their pets have two options: (1) they may contact the Department to have the animal picked up at their home, or (2) they may bring the animal to their local shelter. Similar to dead animal fees, the cost of picking up the animal in the field requires an officer's time to drive to the location, meet with the owner to obtain information and secure the animal, drive back to the shelter, and impound the animal. As such, the Department will strongly encourage pet owners to deliver their animals directly to the shelter. Full cost recovery is not recommended as it may result in animal abandonment and more stray animals on the streets.

Alternatively, the owner may bring their unwanted animal to their local shelter for a much lower fee. While these fees are still less than the actual costs to the Department, again the Department believes it is important to keep these fees at a minimum to discourage animal abandonment.

Redemption Penalties: The purpose of redemption penalties is to dissuade pet owners from allowing their pets to run at large. The costs for housing pets are recovered in the daily board rate. Redemption penalties are a mechanism to encourage socially responsible behavior by creating penalties for pet owners who violate leash laws.

The Department recommends raising the redemption penalty to a level more commensurate with creating a meaningful disincentive for leash law violators. A review of other southern California animal care and control agencies indicates redemption penalties from \$15 - \$90 for the first offense; \$45 - \$120 for the second offense; and \$46 - \$120 for the third offense. The Department currently charges \$10, \$20, and \$30 for first, second and third offenses. Thus, the proposed structure of \$20, \$40, and \$60 will better align with the lower end of penalties charged by other agencies.

Daily Care and Feeding: These fees recover the Department's actual costs for daily care and feeding.

⁽¹⁾ Other agencies surveyed include San Diego County Animal Control, City of Los Angeles Animal Services, Southeast Area Animal Control Authority (SEAACA), Pasadena Humane Society and SPCA, and Orange County Animal Care.